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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): KONINKLIJKE PHILIPS ELECTRONICS N.V. [NL/NL]; Groenewoudseweg 1, NL-5621 BA Eindhoven (NL).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): NIKOLOVA, Marianna, V. [BG/NL]; c/o Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL). PU, Xuemei [NL/NL]; c/o Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL).

(74) Agents: GROENENDAAL, Antonius, W., M. et al.; Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL).

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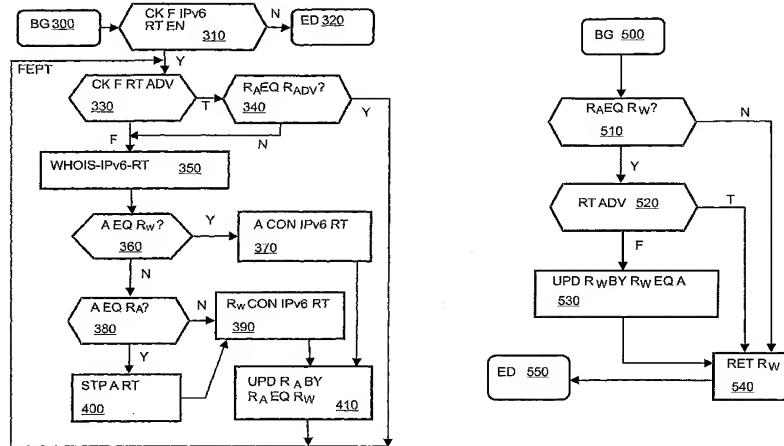
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(54) Title: METHOD OF AUTOMATICALLY TRANSFERRING ROUTER FUNCTIONALITY



(57) **Abstract:** There is provided a heterogeneous communication network (10) preferably conforming to contemporary IPv4/IPv6 standards. The network (10) includes several interconnected nodes including one or more candidate devices (100, 110, 130). Moreover, some of the nodes are operable as data routers (60, 100, 110). The present invention provides a method for dynamically organizing operation of the routers including using the candidate devices (100, 110) to undertake routing functions where existing routing nodes become inoperable. Moreover, the method utilizes link local router advertisements for the nodes to make their presence known within the network (10). Furthermore, the network (10) employs a watcher to be an arbiter of which of the nodes are permitted to function as routers, and the nodes are arranged to communicate with the watcher if a discrepancy and/or conflict in assignment of router arises during operation. Use of the watcher enables the network (10) to be more robust on account of its routers being dynamically reconfigurable.



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